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regarding the Massacre of the East Timorese by the Indonesian Military

One month has already passed since the terrible massacre of a great many East Timorese by the Indonesian National Forces which fired on thousands of East Timorese citizens gathered in Santa Cruz Cemetery for the purpose of offering flowers at the tomb of a fellow citizen who had been killed. We the Japanese Bishops gathered for our Annual Assembly are deeply concerned about this incident as an ecclesiastical community in the same Asia-Oceanic region.

We hear that the starting point of this series of massacres was the killing of two young East Timorese at Motael Church. Many young people who demanded self-determination and were in danger of being arrested were under the protection of this church. Not only the Church in Motael but many others throughout East Timor have been carrying out a humanitarian role in protecting the citizens of East Timor whose fundamental rights have been and are continuing to be violated. Many of them have been in danger of losing their lives. The reason why the churches have acted in this way is because of this continuing violation of the various rights of the East Timorese people. In fact it was because of these violations that Bishop Belo felt compeled to ask you, in a letter of February 1989, to conduct a referendum in East Timor.

We support this demand made by Bishop Belo and we plead with you to find a complete solution to the East Timorese problem. You expressed your intention to send a United Nations human rights specialists team to make a thorough investigation of this massacre. We strongly appeal that you quickly put this intention into practice so that there will be no more precious lives lost in East Timor.

Tokyo, 12th Dec., 1991
(Signs of 3 archbishops and 14 bishops of
the Japanese Catholic Bishops'Conference)

CDHM

Fax: 1-534009

Nagoya Catholic Commission
for Justice and Peace
Tel.and Fax:052-931-7374
(Office hour:Tuesday and Friday
10:00am ~5:00pm)

The Japanese bishops gathered for the Annual Assembly sent the following two letters addressed to Bishop Belo and the Secretary General of the United Nations on 12th of Dec., one month anniversary of the Massacre of the East Timorese at Santa Cruz Cemetery in Dili. The two letters are signed by all the members of the Japanese Bishops Conference;3 archbishops and 14 bishops.

We would be very grateful if you can transmit this faz to the Portuguese Bishops' Conference.